

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate has a great deal to accomplish, including the long-delayed confirmation of former Senator Chuck Hagel to lead the Defense Department.

This week the Senate will also consider two plans to avert devastating across-the-board cuts to military spending as well as domestic initiatives that keep our American families and businesses strong. To give our economy a foundation for growth, Congress must replace these cuts—the so-called sequester—with a balanced approach to deficit reduction.

Democrats would temporarily replace this harsh austerity with a combination of smart spending reductions and measures that close corporate tax loopholes, end wasteful subsidies, and ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more, and it would avoid harmful cuts that will hurt American families, harm military readiness, and hinder our economic recovery. Families and businesses in every State of the Nation—in red States and blue States—are at risk because of these haphazard cuts.

In the Presiding Officer's home State of Virginia, 170 teachers who work with disabled children could lose their jobs. That doesn't count any other teachers. Thousands of children will go without lifesaving vaccines—they will go without lifesaving vaccines—and 90,000 Pentagon employees will be furloughed. It is easy to talk about furloughs unless you are one of those people being furloughed. We don't know how many days a week it will be, how many days a month it will be, but it will be days.

In Nevada 120 teachers could lose their jobs. Local law enforcement agencies will lose essential funding to prosecute crime, and thousands of Defense Department employees will be furloughed, losing wages that support their families and our State's economy.

Residents of the Republican leader's home State would also suffer. Kentucky will lose Federal funding that helps police catch and punish domestic abusers, buys meals for needy seniors and keeps at-risk children in Head Start programs, and more than 11,000 Kentuckians who work for the Defense Department will be furloughed.

Nationwide, sequester cuts will cost more than 750,000 jobs. More than 70,000 boys and girls will be kicked out of their Head Start programs. Meat inspectors, air traffic controllers, FBI officers, and Border Patrol agents will be furloughed. Small businesses, which create two-thirds of all new jobs in this country, will lose access to crucial Federal loans. Thousands of researchers working to cure cancer, diabetes, and scores of other life-threatening diseases will lose their jobs.

But Congress has the power to prevent these self-inflicted wounds. We have the power to turn off the sequester, protect American families and businesses, and ensure our national defense.

In the House and in the Senate, Republicans and Democrats voted to impose these cuts. It will take Republicans and Democrats working together to avert them. Twenty-eight Republicans in the Senate and 174 Republicans in the House voted to impose these painful cuts. To say this is President Obama's sequester is absolutely wrong: 174 Republicans in the House voted for these cuts—that is more than 70 percent—and in the Senate more than 60 percent of the Republicans voted for the sequester. So it is unfair to say it is the President's sequester. We did this together. This would not have passed but for the overwhelming vote of the Republicans in the House and in the Senate.

If those same Republicans would work with Democrats to find a balanced way to reduce the deficit, Congress could avert the delayed sequester today—now. Unfortunately, Republicans would rather let the deficit cuts go into effect than close a single wasteful tax loophole. They would rather cut Medicare, education, and medical research than ask a single millionaire to pay a single dollar more in taxes.

The overwhelming majority of Americans wants us to compromise before their neighbors, friends, and family members get pink slips or notices that they can only work a few days this week or this month.

The overwhelming majority of Americans—including 56 percent of Republicans—supports Democrats' balanced approach. It is all over the country. All over the country Americans favor this approach, a balanced approach, by a large margin, including 56 percent of Republicans.

So once again the only Republicans in the entire country rejecting a reasonable, balanced compromise are Republicans in this building—Republicans in Congress.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Has the Chair announced the business of the day?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, last week, about the time Congress recessed, the President's immigration plan was leaked to the press and was commented on generally. A group of

Senators here have been trying to work on a comprehensive plan and expressed dismay at what it contained and said it was not acceptable.

A brief review of the enforcement section of the President's immigration plan confirms, I think, what my concern has been all along. It is a smoking gun, in truth, that demonstrates this President is not serious about enforcement. That is where we are. Any immigration plan this Nation implements has to be founded on the simple legal principle that people can come to our country in generous numbers, as they always have done, but they should wait their turn. There should be a lawful system. You can't have a lawful system if you are not prepared, not willing, and not committed to ensuring that the laws are enforced.

What we have seen for the last several years is very dramatic. In point after point, I, formerly a Federal prosecutor for almost 15 years, can tell you it effectively neutralized the ability of our current laws to be enforced.

This bill is confirmation the President hasn't had a change of heart. He hasn't had a change of heart. They are continuing to talk as if they expect and plan to establish a lawful system of immigration. When you get down to it and read the language of the legislation, it is not there.

Here are some examples of what the President thinks amounts to enforcement. This is so sad. I will say, with absolute confidence, if the President of the United States had done what he sort of said he was going to do in 2008 when he was running for office, he would make this legal system work. If he had invested time, effort, leadership, moral authority, and maybe a little more money—but it won't take a whole lot of money—and begin to show the kind of progress we need to have, show a commitment he would work to enforce the law in the future, he would be in a much better position to ask for a large reform of law.

Let's look at what his plan reveals. It explicitly, openly, and directly prohibits State and local governments from enforcing immigration laws and from even asking someone for their immigration status.

We have former Governors here in the Senate, former State police superintendents—and I have dealt with this issue for a very long time—that is a stunning development. There are only about maybe 20,000 Federal agents dealing with immigration. There are 600,000 State and local law enforcement officers, in every county, city, hamlet, and town in America who are the ones who come in contact every single day with people in their areas for drunkenness, fighting, burglaries, and drugs. When they find somebody in the course of doing their duties, they discover people who are here illegally.

We want to have a relationship with them and to utilize their capabilities. The Federal Government can then respond, identify the person, and see